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MR. CRAWFORD'S NOVELS.¹

Mr. Marion Crawford has just celebrated his literary majority. It is not meant to imply by this statement that he has been breathing the sharp air of a world of critics and readers for one and twenty years—as a matter of fact he has been writing little over half that time—but that he has actually published twenty-one novels. This surely entitles him to all the privileges and immunities that a literary majority can confer. What these are it boots not to inquire here, but it can hardly be doubted that just as a guardian is expected to have a final settlement with his ward who has come of age, so that guardian of all writers, the critic, is in duty bound to have a settlement with his literary ward, which if it be not final in reality, will, nevertheless, appear so in the eyes of the benevolent critic himself. It will not do, of course, to push this or any other simile too far, for it is plain that it runs aground when we remember the fact that the critic is often younger and of far less reputation than the writer about whom he discourses so knowingly. But this is, perhaps, too formidable a preamble for an article that will be more like a complimentary speech at a young heir's dinner than a carefully audited guardian's account.

Twenty-one novels in twelve years is a record that it would be hard to cap outside the charming pages of Anthony Trollope's *Autobiography*. But Mr. Crawford has something besides mere literary fecundity to look back upon with pride. He has displayed a versatility in choice and treatment of subjects that can hardly be predicated of any other novelist since Sir Walter. He has interested and amused and sometimes instructed a large and increasing number of readers on two continents. He has never written an absolutely dull

¹ A uniform edition of Mr. Crawford's novels has just been completed by Messrs. Macmillan & Co., London & New York.

book, save possibly *Doctor Claudius*, or an immoral one, and he has preserved a level of excellence which, in view of his fecundity, is decidedly remarkable. If he was disappointed in not finding one of his novels in the list of the ten best American books compiled not long since from votes given by the readers of a well-known literary weekly (a list which admitted General Wallace's *Ben Hur* but had no room for Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*), he has been recently consoled by learning from the pages of one of our monthlies that at least five of his novels are in constant demand at the public libraries and that he ranks fifteenth in popularity among all the novelists, living or dead, who are known to the readers that patronize those institutions. In short, Mr. Crawford has every reason to regard himself as a successful writer, whether success means to him contemporary favor, or money, or both.

Most of us that read novels are old enough to remember the sensation created by *Mr. Isaacs* when it appeared about twelve years ago. Mr. Rider Haggard's *She* had not been given to the world then, and the wonders performed by Ram Lal were sufficiently thrilling for a public not quite *fin de siècle*. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, too, was still in embryo and we all knew less of India than we do now. It is no wonder, then, that we read *Mr. Isaacs* and talked about it. A novel with a Persian hero who could steal out by night and kill a man-eating tiger in order to make his English sweetheart a present of the beast's ears as an amulet, was not to be despised by the average reader in search of sensation. There was something pleasant, too, in the immense wealth accumulated by the romantic hero with the realistic name — in the jewels stored away in his apartment in the Indian hotel, being in a double sense "infinite riches in a little room." Those were the days, too, when football was little known, and we were interested enough in the game of polo which Isaacs won in spite of his smashed head. We even swallowed the story of the marvellous ointment which healed that head, and we did not shake our own

heads at the introduction of Shere Ali upon the scene of action. We were prepared, too, to be as cosmopolitan and unprejudiced as the author and to acquiesce in the marriage of the admirable heroine with the Mohammedan who no longer denied her a soul, and we took it very unkindly when we found that she was never to exchange her aristocratic for a plebeian name except in that paradise about which Ram Lal prated so unmercifully in the closing chapter.

One who reads *Mr. Isaacs* a second time after having read the twenty volumes that have followed it in such rapid succession, can hardly fail to perceive that many of its author's most striking characteristics were plainly to be seen from the first in his work, or else were fore-shadowed in it. There is the same easy pleasant style that has carried so many readers smoothly along over thousands of pages, some of which have not been absolutely free from padding, but many of which have been vivacious, or humorous, or sometimes fairly poetic. There is the same fecundity of invention which has furnished an unfailing supply of incident to counterbalance a not infrequent returning upon his own traces of which our author, with the rest of his class, has been guilty. There is the same quite steady and unblushing adherence to the canons of the romancer,—the same reliance upon love as the true motive-spring of fiction. There is, let us acknowledge it gratefully, the same power of telling a story that shall be interesting — a story that is a story pure and simple. There are other characteristics, too, some of them not altogether admirable. There is the same very considerable power of characterization which yet, in the main, creates personages, not persons, and rarely deals with more than a small group of them. There is the same talent for description, the same eye for the beauties of nature, which though sharpened since, has been often that of the traveller mainly bent on seeing things worth describing on his return home — which has never made its observations with the penetrating sympathy of a poet (for he is a poet) like Thomas Hardy. There is, too, the thorough-going air of proprietor-

ship over his characters that has never yet deserted Mr. Crawford—the same stage-manager air, for has he not himself likened his novels to little plays ? There is, further, the same love for the bizarre and the curious that has constantly cropped up in subsequent stories, the same *penchant* for heroes and heroines provided with a plenty of this world's goods, the same fondness for having at least one character who is a “remarkable individual,” and at least two characters who shall make a marriage somewhat out of the common. It would doubtless be hard to maintain successfully that in *Mr. Isaacs* one can find promise of the highly sustained power visible in *Greifenstein*, or of the careful workmanship and thought expended on the *Saracinesca* series, or of the poetical qualities that went to the making of *Khaled*; but it is hardly wide of the mark to say that few first books have ever had displayed in them so many of the traits that were destined to characterise their authors as *Mr. Isaacs*.

If this be admitted, it follows that there is less need than with most writers to examine Mr. Crawford's works in chronological order. It is an advantage, too, both to critic and reader that our author's productions readily lend themselves to classification. Somewhat too readily, perhaps, for Mr. Crawford is nothing if not versatile—has not Mr. Andrew Lang, the most versatile of living critics, pronounced him to be the most versatile of living novelists?—and the number of cross principles of division that suggest themselves is alarming. Still it would seem that nearly all his novels can be grouped as either *Cosmopolitan* or *National*. Under the first head will come those in which the characters, of various nationalities, change their habitat according to their own or the author's convenience, such as *Paul Patoff*, or in which a majority of the characters are foreign to the country they are residing in throughout the course of the narrative, such as *Mr. Isaacs*. Under the second head will come those in which a majority of the characters are inhabitants of the country in which the scene of the story is laid, such as *Saracinesca*, *Greifenstein*, and

Marion Darche. It should be remarked that some of the novels to be hereafter considered as *Cosmopolitan*, might with advantage be classed as romances dealing with the uncommon or the extra-natural, such as *The Witch of Prague*, and that the classification adopted takes no account of the difference between such a novel of society and manners as *Pietro Ghisleri* and such a tragic idyl as *Children of the King*, between such a high-wrought romance as *Greifenstein* and such a simple character study as *Marzio's Crucifix*. It leaves out, also, all distinctions of realistic and romantic, for Mr. Crawford has dallied a little with realism, but this is of slight moment, and it will be as well to forego this application of the principles of analysis to fiction, which always suggests more or less the butterfly and the wheel.

Of the twenty-one novels with which we have to deal, it would seem that five may be classed as *Cosmopolitan*. They are *Mr. Isaacs* (1882), *Doctor Claudius* (1883), *Paul Patoff* (1887), *The Witch of Prague* (1890), and *A Cigarette Maker's Romance* (1890).¹ It may seem singular at first blush that the last two or certainly the last of the novels just named should appear under this classification, but it must be remembered that neither is, properly speaking, a study of local conditions. The chief characters are either nebulous like the "Wanderer," in *The Witch of Prague*, or of a foreign country like the cigarette maker of Munich.

Of *Mr. Isaacs* enough has already been said. When it was followed the next year by *Dr. Claudius* some at least of Mr. Crawford's admirers were disappointed not to say disillusioned. The sprightly ease, the *élan* of the first story seemed in the second to have given way to a quasi-smartness that degenerated into dullness before the book was finished. The characters seemed to be a set of overdressed puppets whose virtues the author was constantly proclaiming in a voice pitched on a superlatively shrill key. Claudius himself and the Countess Margaret might have done fairly well

¹ The years given are those of copyright.

by themselves, but when they were joined to a vulgar American and an improbable English Duke, they became decided bores. The migration of the precious company to America was attended, too, with disastrous consequences, for it led to the introduction of Mr. Horace Bellingham, one of those Admirable Crichtons Mr. Crawford is so fond of—witness Keyork Arabian and San Giacinto. The entrance of this gentleman upon the scene of action, the departure of Claudius on his Russian journey, the villainy of Barker, the mystery of the secret Claudius intrusted to the Duke—all this made some readers at least shake their heads and regret that so talented a man as Mr. Crawford should have been ruined by the success of his first book. It is needless to add that these pessimists were mistaken and that not a few of the readers of 1883 managed to get some pleasure out of what its author proclaimed to be “A True Story.” If statistics are to be trusted, it is still sought by the novel readers that patronize the public libraries. Perhaps they like fine company; perhaps they like to take trips across the Atlantic in a steam yacht and in company with a hero who is “a magnificent specimen of humanity” as a newspaper critic of the day declared. In a country that can find room for a hundred thousand copies of *The Prince of India*, who shall wonder that there may still be found readers for *Doctor Claudius*?

Between the love affairs of “Claudius, Ph.D.,” and of Paul Patoff come those of several other persons, chiefly Italians, with which we shall concern ourselves later. *Paul Patoff* is connected with *Mr. Isaacs* not merely through the fact that it is related by the same interesting Yankee, Paul Griggs, who told us the last named story, but also because it derives much of its interest from the same sources. Its hero is not quite such a remarkable character as Isaacs, nor is Balsamides (another Crichton) the equal of Ram Lal. But it describes another cosmopolitan love affair which this time ends happily after sundry ripples; it gives a picturesque description of a fascinating city, Constantinople; it is full of movement and adventure; and finally, it has a touch of the myste-

rious in the queer mental aberrations of Madame Patoff. While it does not display the maturity of thought and observation that became visible about the same time in *Saracinesca*, and while it can hardly be said to be an advance on *Mr. Isaacs* in point of interest and power, it still remains a story of love, adventure, and picturesque description that may be safely recommended in place of many of the dialect stories and realistic studies with which the novel-reading public of to-day regales itself.

The Witch of Prague is also the natural outcome of the mind that showed such interest in the wonders performed by Indian jugglers. The subject of hypnotic influence has of late years attracted the attention, not only of medical specialists and lawyers, but of nearly every reading man; it is no wonder, therefore, that a writer with Mr. Crawford's peculiar powers of imagination, should have made it the working idea of a new novel. He has not been alone in this, but it is safe to say that *The Witch of Prague* is one of the most remarkable stories of its kind ever conceived. There will always be readers unpleasantly affected by this sort of writing, just as there will always be readers who like nothing better. The catholic reader will neither reject it nor be over-fond of it. About the particular book in question, however, there can be little doubt that it is a romance of striking originality and power, however uncanny and unpleasant some of its incidents may appear to be. It may seem to be an affectation for the author never to give his hero any name save the vague appellation of the "Wanderer," but the effect produced by this vagueness is by no means inartistic. The character of Unorna, the medium, may be unpleasant, but it would be hard to deny that it possesses a fascination somewhat similar to that which she employed upon her victims. Keyork Arabian with his mummies may seem an unnecessary caricature of that modern searcher for the fountain of youth and life, the biologist, but the little man is better conceived than most of Mr. Crawford's wonder-working personages. It will be

hard for any reader to forget the description of the "Wanderer" in the Teyn Kirche with which this rightly dubbed "Fantastic Tale" opens, or that wonderful vision of Simon Abeles' fate that passed through the brain of Israel Kafka as he faced the implacable Unorna in the dismal burying ground of his race. One is uncertain whether the last named scene is not the most powerful piece of imaginative work that Mr. Crawford has ever given us. The fancy may have had a good deal to do with the development of the characters and the incidents of this romance, but assuredly it was only a strong imagination that could conjure up that pathetic ghost of the Hebrew boy murdered for his apostasy just two hundred years ago by the Jews of Prague. It was also a strong imagination that conceived that scene before the altar in which the pure-minded Beatrice was nearly led into committing the act of sacrilege by the baleful influence of her rival. Here, then, we have at last something far removed from the light touch of *Mr. Isaacs* and *Paul Patoff*. *The Witch of Prague* may not be charming, it may be even to some minds revolting, but that it is powerful and daring and such a story as few living men could have written, is a claim that at least admits of argument.

Little need be said here of the story that closes the *Cosmopolitan* series — *A Cigarette Maker's Romance*. It is one of the most pathetic and charming pieces of work that has ever come from Mr. Crawford's prolific pen — much more charming than that other novelette dealing with the artisan class, *Marzio's Crucifix*, although not so powerful in its ending as that other idyl — this seems the only proper word — *Children of the King*. The scolding Frau Fischelowitz, the brawling peasant, Dumnoff, the exquisitely pure and self-sacrificing Vjera, and lastly that thorough gentleman, the Count himself, form a group of characters well worth the few hours needed for making their acquaintance.

Pausing for a moment before passing to the *National* novels we may note how in the eight years that intervene between *Mr. Isaacs* and *a Cigarette Maker's Romance*, Mr.

Crawford has outgrown the tendency to make a more or less meteoric display of his versatility and brilliancy, how he is no longer content to tell a pretty love story dashed with adventure and a description of the many outlying countries he has visited. If *The Witch of Prague* still shows that the mysterious, the extra-natural has a powerful hold upon his mind, it also shows that he has a more artistic control of his powers and that his imagination is as strong as his fancy is daring. And the simple tale of the Munich tobacconist's shop, copyrighted in the same year as the romance of hypnotism, shows that although his permanent interests are always with the romantic school, he is yet alive to the best of what the realists have to offer us, their careful studies of life in all its phases, their passion for setting forth the naked truth about man and his environment—that naked truth that contains in itself for him who has the eyes to see, the essence of all the pathos and sublimity that the world contains.

The *National* novels include a decided majority of Mr. Crawford's works. Beginning with *A Roman Singer* and *To Leeward* (1883) they stretch to *Marion Darche* (1893). Of the thirteen stories that form the series, eight belong to Italy, one to England, one to Germany, and three to America. It will be most convenient to discuss them in this order.

The Italian novels embrace besides the first two named above, the well-known trilogy *Saracinesca* (1887), *Sant' Ilario* (1888), and *Don Orsino* (1892), besides *Marzio's Crucifix* (1887), *Children of the King* (1892) and *Pietro Ghisleri* (1893). With the exception of *Greifenstein* and *Khaled* they contain within their number nearly all the works that a judicious admirer of Mr. Crawford would select in order to base and justify any praise of moment. When we remember that Italy is practically our author's adopted country, this fact will not strike us as remarkable. Few Englishmen or Americans have ever had equal opportunities with Mr. Crawford for studying the Italian charac-

ter—at least of the Italian who has come to manhood since the stirring events of the decade that saw the liberation and unification of the down-trodden country. These opportunities Mr. Crawford has used to very good purpose, and if he has not given us a second *Marble Faun* or another *Ring and the Book*, he must not be blamed for not being a Hawthorne or a Browning. Within the very interesting Roman circle he has chosen in the main to describe, he moves as an undisputed king, and although the critics will still discover in the matured author of *Saracinesca* the buoyant creator of *Mr. Isaacs*, he will also confess with frankness that study and reflection and the consistency of a high artistic purpose have won Mr. Crawford deserved recognition among the men of letters of his time.

It can hardly be said that *A Roman Singer* and *To Leeward* were remarkable advances on *Doctor Claudius*, but they did show progress. The first named story dealt with the romantic love of a young tenor singer sprung from the people, for the seemingly inaccessible daughter of a Prussian Graf residing in Rome. The cold northern beauty melts before the mellow voice of the son of the south, and after a series of adventures not quite so interesting as those of Mr. Isaacs, the pair are happily wedded. While the theme of the story is somewhat threadbare, and while the inevitable “remarkable individual” is present in the person of the lunatic Baron one can still find pleasure in the charming glimpses given of the primitive life led by many inhabitants of the Eternal City, even if the prosing of the old professor in whose mouth the narrative is put, does grow a trifle wearisome.

To Leeward is one of the very few stories in which Mr. Crawford touches on irregular relations between the sexes. Love is his constant theme, but it is always Love as the winged god is supposed, however erroneously, to be conceived by that patroness of the English and American novel, the blushing and innocent school-girl. For once, however, our author determined, it would seem, to write as if the school-

girl patroness did not exist. His boldness did not, nevertheless, lead him very far, and there are few school-girls who need look with longing but unsatisfied eyes at *To Lee-ward* on account of its naughtiness. It is a study of unfortunate matrimonial relations between a rather ordinary but exemplary Italian nobleman and a romantic, silly English girl who has lived most of her life at Rome. The young wife is represented as something of a blue-stockings, but the description of her character is probably overdrawn. She meets a literary Englishman who can perform marvellous feats whether in saving ships or in stealing hearts, succumbs to his fascinations, and elopes with him. The grief of the husband, his consequent insanity, his pursuit of the guilty pair, and the death of the erring wife through a bullet meant for her seducer, are all well described. There is not a little pathos in the fate that comes upon this mediocre gentleman who married the pretty foreign girl that read Spencer and Hegel and other authors whom her husband could not understand and for whom Mr. Crawford, it would seem, has no special liking. Certainly, it may be repeated, this book can do no harm; but it is not certain that Mr. Crawford will ever be repaid for stepping again outside the safe, if not charmed, circle of regular matrimonial relations in his search for a subject.

Saracinesca must have been something of a surprise to those readers of *Blackwood's* who were acquainted with its author's previous work and yet saw month after month what matured powers of thought and observation were being revealed in this story of Rome in the eventful years just preceding the withdrawal of Napoleon's troops. But the novel was the legitimate outcome of the author's previously manifested talents, strengthened by practice and more extended observation, and reinforced by a slowly developed artistic control. It will be unnecessary in the case of a book so well known to give any of the details of its plot or to catalogue its characters. It is one of the best studies that has been made in recent years of the aristocracy of a great capital.

If the characters, more numerous than is usual with Mr. Crawford, are still personages, they are many of them interesting and admirable personages. Corona is a woman whom any novelist might have been willing to create, and the old Prince Saracinesca really seems to be a person and not a personage at all. Perhaps he is the best conceived character, although by no means the most complex, that Mr. Crawford has ever given us. His son, Sant' Ilario, Ugo Del Ferice, Donna Tullia, Gouache, Spicca—who does not remember them and who blames their creator for bringing them upon the scene in novel after novel? And San Giacinto, barely introduced in this story but to be used as a sort of *deus ex machina* in its successors, who does not prefer him to all the Crichtons Mr. Crawford has given life to? Certainly the reader who has not yet followed the courtship of Corona by Sant' Ilario, who has not yet felt himself to be a living part of that old Rome of Pio Nono and Cardinal Antonelli, has something still to read with enjoyment.

Sant' Ilario if not equal to its predecessor, certainly does not show the falling off that is characteristic of sequels. Mr. Crawford treads on dangerous ground when he makes his hero jealous for slight reasons of such a woman as Corona and then expects him to remain a hero to the reader. Few writers have ever been able to do this except Shakespeare. But the story is a very interesting one and much that has been said of *Saracinesca* might be said of it. Especially interesting and well executed is the description of the downward career of the old librarian who has murdered his hypocrite master. *Don Orsino* is the concluding member of this trilogy which its author may make a tetralogy. The grandson of the old Prince, the son of Sant' Ilario and Corona, is a well drawn type of the modern Italian youth who can no longer be contented with the patriarchal life of his ancestors. The story of his financial speculations which give Ugo Del Ferice, the villain of the series, an opportunity to avenge himself on the haughty family that has despised him, enables Mr. Crawford to make a very effective study of the economic and social changes that are rapidly

transforming the capital of modern Italy. The plot is somewhat slow in developing, but does not lack interest or power. The novel, therefore, forms a not unworthy pendant to its predecessors.

Pietro Ghisleri, the last of the Italian novels and not more than a year old, should be mentioned here because, while the Saracinesca family are not important figures in it, its scene is laid amid the social surroundings with which the readers of the annals of that family are acquainted. Ghisleri, the hero, is one of the most complex characters Mr. Crawford has ever conceived, but his complexity is more hinted at by the author than shown in his own actions. Laura Arden, the heroine, is of the Corona type, but not the equal of that noble lady. The diabolical enmity of Adele towards Ghisleri and Laura is, of course, the *motif* of the story and is powerfully described. Her fiendish use of her smattering of bacteriological science in the inoculation of the poor English cripple with the germs of scarlet fever, is the modern counterpart of Browning's *In a Laboratory* and is worthy of the author of *The Witch of Prague*. Altogether one feels that *Pietro Ghisleri* is well fit to rank with the *Saracinesca* series as one of Mr. Crawford's most powerful stories.

Marzio's Crucifix and *Children of the King* which conclude the Italian stories, demand only a word. Marzio is an interesting study of a talented artisan who has nearly lost his reason through dabbling in socialism and other dangerous modern isms. One feels, however, that the account of his madness and his recovery is not far removed from what Mr. Crawford has justly denounced in his little book, *The Novel—What It Is*, the purpose novel. Our author is nothing if not conservative in matters relating to religion, modern science, and politics, and his often promulgated views seem to find purposive expression in the story under discussion. Nothing of this sort, however, can be said of *Children of the King*, the loveliest of the Italian series. Here Mr. Crawford is at his best in his description of the beauties

of the southern coast of Italy, and his chief character, Ruggiero, ignorant sailor though he was, will not soon pass out of the mind of any thoughtful reader. The society people who set off Ruggiero and his brother, are not especially interesting, but they do not mar seriously the idyllic character of the book which turns to a tragedy before the last page is reached.

A Tale of a Lonely Parish (1886), is the single story of English life that our versatile novelist has given us, certain chapters of *Paul Patoff* alone excepted. It is a worthy connecting link between the earlier novels and *Saracinesca*. It is interesting, simple, and well told. The meteoric displays of *Mr. Isaacs* and *Dr. Claudius* have no place in it. There is, perhaps, a suspicion of thread-bareness in the plot, for the wives of convicts have been known before to be thrown into confusion by their husbands' unexpected return—indeed this happens in Mr. Crawford's very last novel—but we forgive this for the sake of the quiet style and the artistic character of the whole work. It is decidedly in Anthony Trollope's vein, and that veteran would not have blushed to own it.

Greifenstein (1889) is by some considered Mr. Crawford's best work. It is certainly a romance of high power and originality. So much of a romance is it that somehow one wishes its scene had been laid a couple of centuries back. No one wishes that it should be removed from the Black Forest, so admirably described, or from the ruined castle that sheltered Hilda and her mother; but would not the almost Œdipean tragedy which took place in the gloomy forest have lost much of its repulsiveness if it had been somewhat removed from these days of the sensational newspaper with its daily budget of horrors? Be this as it may, we cannot deny that Mr. Crawford's imagination served him well throughout the whole course of his tragic romance. We almost doubt whether Hilda be not a finer, a more lovable woman than Corona herself and whether Rex be not a real and intensely interesting person after all. And

we cannot well forget that admirable description of German student life broken in so rudely by the announcement of a messenger who for a moment makes us think of a Greek tragedy with its implacable coil of fate. Whether a future generation will care to read *Greifenstein* is to us somewhat doubtful, but there are few of its present day readers who will not acknowledge its absorbing interest.

It has been a matter of regret with some of Mr. Crawford's admirers that an American with the patriotic baptismal name of Francis Marion, should have written so little that relates to the country of his fathers. In view of his birth and his cosmopolitan training, this regret seems unreasonable, but Mr. Crawford has taken pains to announce that his foreign subjects are not chosen because he finds American life devoid of interest, and he has on four separate occasions endeavored to describe that life in his books. The American episode of *Dr. Claudius* has already been referred to. Besides this we have *An American Politician* (1884), *The Three Fates* (1891), and *Marion Darche* (1893). While none of these stories can be described as an absolute failure, it would seem that it would take a perfervidly patriotic critic to maintain that they rank with Mr. Crawford's best productions. The first named leaves the reader with the decided impression that its author had been not uninfluenced by the recent success of Messrs. Howells and James. Its scene was laid in Boston but its politics came from Utopia. They had a good "mugwump" flavor, however, and the year 1884 was not an inauspicious one for the speech of the hero which filled the concluding pages. But political speeches must be superlatively good to fit well into the average novel. It is doubtful whether *An American Politician* would not have been a flat failure but for one character — and that not an American — the little English heroine, Jo Thorn. The story is still worth reading if but for the purpose of making her acquaintance.

In *The Three Fates* and *Marion Darche* Mr. Crawford has

undertaken a study of New York society. Whether these stories fall below *Saracinesca* in interest because New York is less interesting than Rome or because Mr. Crawford is less at home there, must be left for others to determine. That he has not succeeded as well in his American as in his Roman novels is patent to most of his readers. *The Three Fates* has a special element of interest because the hero writes novels, and one is constantly wondering how far Mr. Crawford is speaking for himself and his own methods of work. It is also interesting as a study of a morbid girl who does not know her own mind when she is confronted with the problem of matrimony. But it may be doubted whether New York society will care to be judged by this story or by *Marion Darche*, which describes the woes brought upon a devoted wife by the rascality of a husband of a sort only too common at the present day.

We have now completed our survey of Mr. Crawford's works with the exception of three volumes still unclassified. They are *Zoroaster* (1885), *With the Immortals* (1888), and *Khaled* (1891). The first is an historical romance, the second is no novel at all, the third is an Arabian tale worthy of Scheherazade herself. It is plain that they could not properly have been brought under our principles of classification without some confusion.

Zoroaster has been a good deal praised, especially the opening scene which describes Belshazzar's vision. That there is power in the story and that it represents faithful study on the part of its author, few will care to deny. Zoroaster himself, Darius, and Atossa, are characters that are brought out with some force and distinctness, even if the plot is rather thin. Mr. Crawford seems to have realized what is, perhaps, the chief defect of his book when he entitled it in his dedication, a drama. He felt, probably, that he had not given himself sufficient room to develop a great historical romance. He had approximated to the conciseness of a drama rather than the ample and leisurely inclusiveness that is characteristic of the true historical romance. The

romancer must have room and time to weave his web, and perhaps this is why some brisk persons in these fast days tell us that Sir Walter Scott and Cooper are antiquated. Be this as it may, *Zoroaster* suffers from the lack of amplitude and repose.¹

With the Immortals is a curious grafting of the love of scientific marvels evidenced in *The Witch of Prague*, with that perennial idea of intercourse with the great dead which is exemplified in Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*. A gentleman-dabbler in electricity rents a deserted island off the Italian coast and in a marvellous way draws "spirits from the vasty deep" with whom he and the inmates of his establishment hold long and, it is needless to say, interesting converse. Heine, Dr. Johnson, and Julius Cæsar are among the spirits who honor him with their visits. Their conversations are in many respects admirable, and in no other book does Mr. Crawford give such evidence of his own wide reading and culture. There is so much that is suggestive, clever, and even valuable in the book that it ought hardly to be read as a novel at all.

Khaled has not, so far as one can judge from the literary press, made the same impression upon the public as many others of its author's works. It is easy to see why this is so. A tale worthy of being told on the thousand and second night would not be likely to attract the critics who are on the lookout for the latest dialect writer or the last woman who has written in favor of woman's rights or against Christianity. And yet it is questionable whether in the conception and development of this delightful tale Mr. Crawford has not shown more real literary power and more true poetic imagination than in all the rest of his twenty-one volumes. The idea of the soul won by the Jinn Khaled through the love that slowly grows up in the heart of his princess bride is a noble one and the story that embodies it is admirably worked

¹ Nevertheless the French Academy, we are told, awarded the author a medal for it and for *Marzio's Crucifix*, the French versions of which were both from Mr. Crawford's facile pen.

out. Literary prognostications are always uncertain, but it would not surprise the present writer, could he have the power of returning to the earth a generation or two hence through the means of some wonderful discovery, to find *Khaled* still read and *Mr. Isaacs* and even *Saracinesca* and *Greifenstein* unsought for by the patrons of the public libraries, if those cumbersome collections had not then perished beneath the weight of their own accumulations.

But here we must take our leave of Mr. Crawford. It would be pleasant to dwell on many points that have suggested themselves in the course of our reading, such as his quaint but effective resuscitation of the elaborate Homeric simile, and the occasional bits of original poetry of some merit that he permits himself to insert in the body of his prose romances. But space is wanting and readers are apt to grow weary even when so versatile and charming a writer as Mr. Crawford is the theme—a writer who has made thousands of friends and deserves to make thousands more.

W. P. TRENT.